

From: Jeanne Wardlaw
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2015 8:57 PM
To: Briel, Ron
Subject: Additional comments on Surgical Assistants

Dear Mr. Briel,

My name is Jeanne Wardlaw, and I have been a Certified Surgical First Assistant since 1997. Prior to that, I was a practicing Certified Surgical Technologist. I have witnessed many changes though the years in the medical profession.

I would like to enlighten you, along with the rest of the Review Committee, just what it is that Surgical First Assistants do in the Operating room.

Once I don surgical scrubs, I enter the Operating Room and proceed to check and double check that all the supplies are in the room readily available to be opened in a strict, sterile environment, and organized for the procedure.

There is usually a Registered Nurse, as well as another Surgical Technologist in the room making sure these tasks are being performed. The Surgical Technologist is the person responsible for maintaining a sterile field while setting up the surgical table. Counts are performed, which include instruments, sponges, needles, sharps, and any other items that need to be accounted for.

Depending on the particular Surgical procedure being performed, the Surgical Technologist as well as the Surgical Assistant are knowledgeable of all aspects of what will be going on during the Surgery.

This includes the type of anesthesia, correct patient position, where to prep the area involved, how to drape the area, correct instruments, suture, cautery and suction, if needed. Once the Surgeon enters the room, the patient is identified, date of birth, the procedure being performed, any allergies, and finally, any concerns are then voiced.

Patient safety is the whole surgical teams responsibility, as the goal is to get the patient safely through the surgical procedure without any complications, post-operative infections, and onto a safe recovery, back to a life that the patient knew before having a health issue.

I am very capable of performing the role of a Surgical Technologist or a Surgical Assistant. With my credentials as being Certified through the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting and an active member of the Association of Surgical Technologists, I am a valuable team member in the operating room.

I am currently employed by a Surgeon who performs all types of GYN surgeries, and am referred to as a Allied Health Professional. I am responsible for keeping my Certification and BLS current, as well as keeping my Malpractice liability up to date. My privileges are current in hospitals we operate in, which also include rural hospitals, that we serve.

The Surgical Technologist, as well as the Surgical First Assistant are able to anticipate what the Surgeon needs to perform the surgical procedure. Knowing the sequence of the procedure, instruments needed, equipment, suture, and any addition supplies are all a part of our specialized training. Having worked in Surgery for several years, has given me the knowledge, experience, and the confidence to make sure the Surgeons are able to perform their job. Having a competent Surgical First Assistant in the Surgical Suite helps with this task.

I am not sure if many realize that a patient is charged a fee per minute, to be in the Operating Room. Many factors weigh into the fee charged, whether it be a simple or complicated procedure. So, every moment that can be saved with qualified Certified Surgical First

Assistants, as well as Certified Surgical Technologists, not only conserves patient safety, but also will help to keep Health care costs within the Usual and Customary charges dictated by Health care prices.

As a qualified Certified Surgical First Assistant, one has the credentials to help in tissue manipulation, suturing, skin closure, and finally applying dressings to expedite the surgical procedure in a timely manner. Hence freeing the Surgeon to write post-op orders, prepare for the next procedure, or heading to the the next task at hand. The Surgeon does remain in the Surgical Suite while the Certified Surgical First Assistant is finishing the final stages of the surgical procedure. These tasks are now on hold at the present time, causing frustration for everyone involved.

Once again, I hope to convey how important the role of a Surgical First Assistant is in the Operating Room.

Thank you for your time,

Jeanne Wardlaw CST/CSFA